

SLIDING DOWN HILL.

IN CITIES THIS SPORT IS KNOWN AS
COASTING.

No Matter What It Is Called, It Is One of
the Most Thrilling of Mundane Amusements — Meteoric Pungs and Jolly
Frolicsome Tramps Up Again.

Coasting is the name applied in cities and towns to that northern winter sport which in its most modern evolution is termed tobogganing and requires a specially constructed sled for its practice. "Riding down hill" is what it used to be called in certain country districts 20 or 30 years ago, and by this term it is still known in many localities. Its name doesn't matter anyway. If there is a more thrilling or exciting amusement, I have yet to enjoy it or hear of it.

It is only in certain places that the sport ever rises to the dignity of a science, or that it can be practiced with comparative safety. In cities or towns or their near vicinity there is room only in the streets, and there the danger from col-



GLIDING DOWN THE CHEST "STEERAGE."

Slides with seats and foot passengers are obvious. The roll of its victims, as published from day to day in the northern newspapers, some winters is long and appalling. The length of this fall is confirmed to be by the use of the "deadly box," a clumsy contrivance fit only for short, unrounded inclines.

The best coasting country is not too high or too low. The configuration of territory must be of the sort that is called "rolling," and the slopes must be long as well as comparatively gentle, so that a ride of a mile or more may be enjoyed. Given such territory, plenty of boys and girls and a cool winter, and "riding down hill" will flourish to the enjoyment of everybody, the coasting of chests, the pinching of cheeks, the brightening of eyes and the tightening of muscles. In fine, there is no doubt that it is as beneficial as it is thrilling.

The superstitious weeks of skating that were inaugurated in the youngsters and their elders who inhabited the village called The Hook during the winter of 1853-54 were followed by a full month of such excellent conditions for skating as brought into being a craze only less pronounced and widespread than that which was manifested on the ice. The snow fell to a depth of about two feet at first. Every day it thawed just a little, until once in twelve weeks an inch or two of frost set in. The winter winds that year were moderately mild, and the drifts were correspondingly easy to manage. There were two favorite runs that winter. One was down the long, easy "west hill" road and the other down the hills and down the steep "lower hill."

The west hill road led from the village to a wooded staircase plateau, wherein dwelt both a dozen families only. Because these inhabitants were so few the traffic over the road was small and the danger from slides between slides and slings and carters slight. The road had no long, precipitous reaches, no sharp, sharp turns, no high and dangerous ledges on its lower side for careless steersmen to run off and break their necks or their limbs off their legs. It was a good road and a half long, gently sloping most of the way, but with an occasional "pitch" to help excitement, two or three curves that rendered good steering desirable, and about a dozen of those "water turns" that are commonly called "think ye, masters." If you have ever rode down hill in a good coasting country, you will understand just what the west hill was like.

North hill had no road. It was not available as a riding place most years, for generally the high winds swept it



"BURNT."

nearly bare of snow, which was piled in high drifts around the stumps and the fences. This winter the snow lay still, and each day's sun would melt the top a little, which would freeze at night, and in time the beautiful white, smooth expanse was covered with a crust strong enough to bear a man and even a horse, and over which a good sled would glide with such a speed as to take away the breath of an inexperienced rider. The farm owners kindly consented to have a few lengths of fence taken down so as to give the pleasure seekers full swing, and a ride of about half a mile over the crest, which terminated at the pond.

was secured that was far more exciting than the ride down west hill, though not so prolonged.

There were no "deadly boxes" in The Hook. There were to my knowledge but two "boughten" sleds. The owner of a gayly painted and fancy sled from a store was jeered at by his companions as a "girl boy." The best sleds were constructed by the village wagon maker, and about half of them were "knee sleds" and the rest "boards." There was a great diversity of opinion as to the proper shape of a sled runner. Some held that it should be low and sharp, with a slight, long curve, others that it should be high and with a rather short rounding curve.

All agreed, however, that the runner must be supplemented by a good "shoe" and concerning this important point there was again a great diversity of opinion. Thick cast iron shoes were favorite with those who lived east of the millpond; thin, slender steel shoes with those who lived west. Singularly enough, though the matter of sled shoes had been argued every winter for 40 years when I first knew The Hook, it was as far from settlement as ever when I left the place. Victory would perch on the banner of the "cast ironers" after an exciting race down north hill, only to shift to that of the steel contingent the next day after an equally exciting trial of speed down west hill. It was the general consensus of Hook opinion at the close of that season, I believe, that the steel shoes were best on road work, while the cast ones were better for crust riding. But the next winter the controversy broke out anew with all its original virulence and intensity.

There were then and still are three ways of steering a sled—by leg, astride-straddle, Hookers' called it, and kurnitz. I am not sure about the proper spelling of this word, which can only be arrived at when its derivation has been discovered. It is not in any dictionary so far as I know, and I have spelled it phonetically. The steersman sat on his domed sledge, left leg a rudder, grasped the roller of his sled firmly with his left hand and the rear end of the sled with his right. Each method of steering had its advocates.

"Baffyzat" was best in favor among the boys because the rider could not fall well and was in danger of hitting his brains out, and among the parents because it was a great deal harder on one leather than the other two methods. It was used very little on either of the long rides.

"Straddle" steering was safest if more than one passenger was to be taken on the sled, but kurnitz was the general favorite. It certainly possessed decided advantages when the steersman was a sturdy young fellow, hoisted to the knee, broad shoulders and deep chested, and the passenger a star eyed, pink cheeked, carmine lipped Hook girl. The kurnitz



THE OLD FOLKS AND THE DEACON'S FUNERAL.

steersman's passenger had to sit on the front of the sled and the ability of the steersman. The rider first took the right to the first seat. The next to follow had not the right to sit at the first seat, about 15 rods beyond had been passed by the leader. This was to minimize the danger of accident in case the leader upset or was thrown off his sled. The ride down the north hill on the crust took up not more than a minute and sometimes not quite that. But two sleds could be on the road at the same time for the precautionary reasons. Only the most skillful riders were allowed to go down the crag, and passengers were mostly buried. As it was, most of the sleds going down with the rider, there were twice as many accidents on the crust as on the road, but serious hurts were rare, the worst ones being the result of stones sticking up through the crust. When a stone was struck by a sliding sled rudder, there was immediate some resounding ground and noisy tumbling, with subsequent bruise and black and blue spots and applications of arnica.

The meteoric rapidity of the trip down the hills was quite offset by the slowness of the tramping up hill. But these upward marches were not tedious. They were beguiled by song and story and rural jest and an occasional rough and tumble in the snow that added to the youthful spirits of the trampers and pre-empted all semblance of dullness.

Toward the middle of February the older inhabitants began to take a hand, and the silver handed old chaps that had skated earlier in the season rode down the hill more than once apiece just to show the youngsters how to steer. In this they did not succeed remarkably well, but they liked the fun that they had not before enjoyed since their youth so much that they finally got out Deacon Bixby's "pong," had it melted about a third of the way up the west hill, had two handles fastened to the pole, the two best steersmen of The Hook, took their places on the sleds, and a dozen or more of the old folks got into the "pong," and down the hill they went shrieking and laughing like so many children.

L. D. MARSHALL.

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HARTLEY'S STATUE - ERICSSON

Gold Under a Catapult.

Squamaline falls, in this state, have developed an attraction not found on the guidebooks. The story is vouches for by reputable men working on that stream.

A big piece of quartz bouldier, rich in the precious metal, has been secured from an unknown depth directly beneath the huge fall of water, and the most wonderful part of the story is the manner in which the sparkling and precious stone was secured from a place almost unapproachable.

Rushing logs over the 265-foot fall has been a custom for many years past, and there is no prettier sight in the world than to see the giant sticks shoot out into the space and then drop head on into the roaring water below.

During the shooting of the logs one particular log went over recently and shot straight downward and was lost in the pool below. After it had risen to the surface and floated a few strokes it was seen to have a rock embedded in one end, which, upon examination, was found to be quartz rich in gold.

The only explanation is that the log in the mad plunge into the pool under the falls came in contact with some ledge of gold with force enough to embed the gold in the firm wood.—Seattle Telegraph.

The Preacher's Preacher.

The preacher in a newspaper office has much to answer for, but the Brooklyn Eagle is "spilling it on" rather too heavily when it says: He is responsible for making the hasty phrase "demon straitje joy of Chicago" the "demon straitje joy of Chicago." The latter apparently describes the periodical publication of the World's Fair City, but it was not that to refer to her weakness. He also was guilty of libel when he made The Tribune in the days of Horace Greeley an "old man" when he meant "William H. Seward." And he has even made Dr. Lathrop irreverent by inducing the work of the little, old composer who set up the first line of one of the famous preacher's sermons in this way, "My tall friend, our Lord," when it should have been, "My test finds our Lord."

It is not necessary to mention any gross instances of the preacher's peculiar villainy—we are writing as an editor now, and not on the exalted and unprejudiced mood that becomes us when we discuss politics and religion with judicial impartiality. Every one has heard of the preacher who consented to the printing of "no cows no cream," for "no cream, no crown," and of "in the richness of sin" for "in the interior of Asia."—Troy Times.

A Man's Wardrobe.

A gentleman's complete wardrobe consists of a dress suit, including a "Tuxedo" the ever popular stock coat, the modest, diagonal or corkscrew and the distinctive tailors' or cheviot business suit—at least three changes—and four or five pairs of trousers, varying in color and pattern, so as to answer for any occasion and look suitable with any coat and waistcoat. In addition a man should possess overcoats for spring, fall and winter wear, besides an ulster for very severe weather.

The prudent man will appreciate the fact that there is economy in having a complete outfit as suggested, so as to avoid wearing any particular garment incessantly and causing it to look shabby before it is worn out. The "Tuxedo" may be dispensed with. Two business suits might answer—one of cassimere or cheviot and the other of black worsted, which can be worn ordinarily in the evening. One lightweight overcoat could be used for spring and autumn if proper judgment be exercised in the selection, and the ulster is not indispensable.

Good material, good trimmings and good workmanship are essential to economy.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

An Artist's Memorial.

A monument to the memory of Raffet, created in the garden of the Louvre, was inaugurated in the presence of all the leading notabilities of the artistic world. It consists of the bust of that artist on a granite pillar, with a trophy of three flags, representing the first republic, the first empire and the reign of Louis Philippe. Surrounding the staves of these flags is a wreath of laurel and a curtain with a hole in it made by a cannon ball. It is the exact copy of the entrance at the Artillery museum in the Invalides, which belonged to a young carbineer of the empire named Faureau, killed at Waterloo.

Iso. The large bronze figure at the foot of the pedestal represents one of the masterpieces of Raffet, the "Hovells." It is that of a drummer of the Guards of the Guard of 1809. The drummer is leaning to arms, and at his feet is a suitable inscription. This extremely artistic monument is the work of M. Fremiet, the well known sculptor and author of the monument to Joan of Arc.—Paris Letter in London Standard.

A Wall From Gotham.

Reduced New York city car fares to a cent. It is quite enough and will be a prelude to the revocation of the street railroad franchises, which should be done without delay. The pavements and sidewalks of the city are in a disgraceful condition. Let the city run the cars for the benefit of the people, and the surplus profit could be devoted to giving New York the finest streets in the world. The street monopolists have had their inning, the people now want a show.

Let us make it an election issue—"The rights for the people"—and crush the monopolists. If we have to pay all to use our streets, let us pay it to ourselves, and not to the impudent grabbers who now sponge them off the law and levy tribute on citizens.—Editor.

A Tippecanoe Resolution.

About 70 years ago the grand jury of the county of Tippecanoe passed the following resolutions: "First, That a new courthouse should be laid. Second, That the materials of the old courthouse be used in building the new courthouse. Third, That the old courthouse should not be taken down till the new courthouse is finished."—Seventy Years of Irish Life.

Custome-Perier.

Cosimir-Perier, the French premier, is credited with the possession of a determined will. He has a calm manner and a fiery air and distinguished himself in the war of 1870. He was a captain in the Franco-Prussian war as a captain of Maule. An absolute that is said to be characteristic of the man relates that, having observed the accurate marksmanship of one of the soldiers, he promised him the military medal and added, "Where do you learn to shoot so well?" "I am captain," replied the soldier, "it was while practicing on the peasants in our park." The conversation ended there, but the soldier got his medal in due course of events.—Kansas City Times.

A Photograph of Beecher.

We photographers have queer experiences. Ours is a most excellent opportunity to study human nature, and making a bête-brisé is not the one trick of the calling. In order to take a good photograph one should know something about the sitter's habits and surroundings. This he must learn at a single glance or by an acute question.

Henry Ward Beecher thoroughly enjoyed having his photograph taken. To his own words, "Whenever I have 10 minutes to spare I run up and have someone make a new photograph of me." Mr. Beecher was impulsive and earnest. By talking to him for a few moments about a favorite subject I could arouse his enthusiasm, and then when the fire was still in his eyes and his face was lighted up with expression I snapped the camera and got a picture which Beecher, the orator and preacher, and Beecher, the thinker, stuck out at every point.—Napoleon Sarony in New York Herald.

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